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Inside

- Letters to the editor 2
- Commentary:
Treat those getting out well 2
- Budget prepares for future 3
- Broadcast on DOD reform 4

AF increases recruiters

WASHINGTON —

To counter the current recruiting challenges facing the military, the Air Force is committed to getting 2,000 recruiters across America as quickly as possible, according to Secretary of the Air Force F. Whitten Peters.

"We are beginning to see an increase in the number of people agreeing to enter the Air Force, but we still have much work to do," said Secretary Peters. Increasing the number of Air Force recruiters is a central aspect of the service's get-well plan.

Air Force recruiters are currently outnumbered by their sister services. **continued on Page 3**



The Air Force is featured on driver Dale Jarrett's #88 car sponsored by Ford and operated by Yates Racing. Introduced to NASCAR fans last weekend in Atlanta, it will make its racing debut at the Coca Cola 600 in Charlotte, N.C. on Memorial Day weekend. The Air Force is taking many steps, including increasing its number of recruiters, to combat recruiting problems.

Enlisted retention rates up

- Leadership look at people, readiness may be paying off

WASHINGTON— As Air Force leaders continue to focus on people and readiness concerns, their efforts may be paying off, as the latest retention rates indicate a positive trend leading into March.

The first- and second-term retention rates for January and February are up compared to this time last year, and we are encouraged by this positive sign for retention gains," said Lt. Col. Jan Middleton, chief of retention policy, deputy chief of staff for personnel.

Compared to this time last year, she said the first-term rate for February was 59 per-

cent, up from 46 percent, and 74 percent vs. 73 percent for second-term airmen. For career airmen, the retention rate remained steady at 91 percent.

The upward turn is good news, especially compared to the reenlistment rates the service experienced in fiscal 1999, Colonel Middleton said, when all three categories fell below their reenlistment goals.

To date, cumulative first and second term reenlistment rates are 52 percent and 70 percent vs. FY99 rates of 49 percent and 69 percent, for first and second-term airmen, respectively.

"We are pleased with the numbers we're **continued on Page 4**

NEWSBYTES

Clubs offer scholarships

Air Force clubs are conducting the fourth annual club membership scholarship program. Any club member or their family members are eligible to apply. Three scholarships are awarded. The largest is \$5,000, second is \$3,000, and third is \$2,000. All nominations should be submitted to base-level Services commanders or directors by July 15. Services will award scholarships by Oct. 1.

Contact your local club for more information.

E-8 promotion stats out

The Air Force will release its list of the newest senior master sergeant selectees March 15. Beginning April 1 and over the course of the next year, 1,405 individuals out of 17, 812 eligibles will pin on their new stripes. This represents a selection rate of 7.89 percent, a slight decrease from last year's promotion rate of 7.98 percent.

The complete list of selections will be posted on the AFPC home page by close of business March 17.

Colonel court-martialed

The former commander of the 18th Flight Test Squadron, Hurlburt Field, Fla., was found guilty of making a false official statement, engaging in an unprofessional relationship, one specification of assault, three specifications of indecent acts on a female under 16 and one specification of indecent liberties on a female under 16.

Col. James Sills was sentenced to eight years confinement and dismissal from the Air Force during a general court-martial that ended March 10.

Census forms in mail

Census 2000 questionnaires are in the mail and military members are encouraged to ensure they are counted. Census Day is April 1. Military Census 2000 will be conducted during April 3-7.



Letters to the editor

U.S. Air Force Online News publishes letters based on their appeal to an Air Force-wide audience each week.

Send your letter to the U.S. Air Force Online

News staff by completing the online form at <http://www.af.mil/newspaper/>

Due to the number of letters, not all letters can be published. Letters may be edited for grammar and length. Only letters accompanied by a valid name and email address will be considered.

Change Space-A eligibility

I agree changes should be made to Space-A travel eligibility. As the widow of a career Air Force NCO it is the one privilege that is not available. The cost factor should not be a consideration ...

Marmie Apsley
Broken Arrow, Okla.

Get name right

In the article "DOD slashes base sales price," [March 8] a reference is made to "bowling alleys." The Air Force does not have and has not had bowling alleys for several years. The Air Force has bowling centers that focus on providing complete family entertainment opportunities ... Improper references ... further the challenge of the bowling industry to break free of past stigmas ...

Tim Mathison
Randolph AFB, Texas

Promised care

Let's not call "free" the lifetime medical benefits, military retirees and their dependents were promised. It was promised to us, and it was earned through our serving 20-plus years with our government.

Staff Sgt. Dwayne A. Wholaver Sr.
Retired, USAF

Put ear to ground

My husband enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1946 ... All retirees from that era are fully aware ... the military recruiter, promoted a lifetime of the best possible medical care for retirees and their spouses ... We paid our dues and expect the government to quit backing away from their word ... Diminished benefits, broken promises...word gets around, folks! Decision-makers should put "their ears to the ground!"

Mrs. Carl M. Stark

Treat those getting out well

THOSE WHO SERVE SHOULD BE TREATED AS ALUMNI, NOT DESERTERS

By Master Sgt. Joseph Bulmahn
RAF Lakenheath, United Kingdom

I got an e-mail the other day from one of my troops who left the Air Force last year. Ben was an outstanding airman in every sense of the word. He served his country honorably for four years and had a work ethic I sincerely admired.

His reason for leaving was simple; his father owned a construction business and was going to pay him substantially more than his E-4 pay. He did not particularly dislike the Air Force. He just had what he felt was a better deal. I respected him and was very supportive of his decision. I had already made sure he knew all the opportunities and benefits of staying in. But in the end it was his decision to get out.

What was interesting about the e-mail was he was asking about the Air Force Reserve. He wanted to know what I knew about it and my opinion. I was a little surprised that less than a year after getting out he wanted back in. I reflected on this for a while and thought about the current recruitment and retention problem in the military. I also wondered how many young people Ben had spoken to

concerning the Air Force since he went back home.

I suddenly realized the enormous impact those leaving the service have on our recruitment. Ben is 23 now and has siblings, friends and acquaintances in their late teens and 20's. The Air Force wants us all to be recruiters. I bet Ben knows more prospects than I do; a 34-year-old stationed overseas. Whether we acknowledge it or not, those who leave the force can be our best recruiters or our worst nightmare.

My recruiter was my Dad. When I was a kid Dad spoke fondly about his four years in the Air Force. He had so many exciting experiences during his enlistment and I loved listening to his stories. He was the one man I respected and trusted most so I hung on to every one of his words. Well into his 50's, Dad still remembers supervisors and co-workers from his late teen years with explicit detail. Because of Dad's influence on me and his attitude toward the Air Force, I was destined to enlist since early childhood. I even ran around in his old cotton fatigue shirt until I was about 12. I still have that old shirt stored in my Grandma's attic. He didn't know it at the time, or even intend it, but he was my recruiter.

Why do we treat those who choose to

leave as second-class citizens? Supervisors don't usually take the time to write departing troops medals, even when they were exceptional performers. And often when we do, someone up the chain questions why we bother. We immediately shift our full attention to the airmen who stay. Those are the ones we need to develop and take care of, right? Let's face it, we stop caring about those getting out as they get closer to leaving.

I didn't do that with Ben. We still keep in touch and I still care about his well-being and future. I am confident because of how I treated him; Ben is someone else's recruiter and may not even know it yet. If they have his character, send him to my flight. Ben himself may return to our "family" in some capacity.

Thousands of young Americans choose to enter the Air Force, serve honorably and complete their commitment. Despite our best efforts to retain them, many will elect to leave after four years. Let's start treating them as alumni, not deserters. Remember, these airmen may become future Guardsman, Reservists, commissioned officers, or may return to the active enlisted force. At a minimum, they can be our best recruiters. Let's never forget that. *(Sergeant Bulmahn is assigned to the 48th Medical Operations Squadron)*



Budget prepares Air Force for future challenges

By Senior Airman A.J. Bosker

Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON – The fiscal 2001 Air Force budget will transform the most potent aerospace force in the world – making it lighter, leaner and more flexible to meet the national security challenges of the new century, Secretary of the Air Force F. Whitten Peters told Congress during a defense appropriations hearing March 8.

“Our goal is to provide a balanced and integrated plan that supports our evolution into the expeditionary aerospace force structure and implements a number of the lessons learned from Kosovo,” Secretary Peters said.

Last year was a remarkable one for the Air Force, he said. “It showed many of the investments we’ve made over the past decade and beyond have produced real war fighting capability.”

“We opened 21 expeditionary locations and employed over 500 aircraft in the air war over Serbia,” said Gen. Michael E. Ryan, Air Force chief of staff, at the hearing. “During

and following Operation Allied Force, our airmen also continued a marathon effort flying sustained combat operations throughout the year in Iraq and responding to short-notice humanitarian efforts globally.”

“We addressed our critical requirements in this budget to tackle the challenges and strive for a full recovery of our force readiness while budgeting for tomorrow’s needed capabilities,” General Ryan said.

These capabilities are precision, standoff, system integration and information technology, he said.

“We have to have precision, not only in our destructive capability, but in our intelligence gathering capability to take information from varying sources and turn it into useful data,” General Ryan said. “We also have to have more standoff capability. This is something that we have worked very hard on so when we need to confront the heaviest of defenses, we’re able to get in without putting the force at tremendous risk.”

The article is available in its entirety online.



photo by Technical Sgt. Scott Wagers

The fiscal 2001 budget will allow the Air Force to become lighter and more flexible.

AF paper hits 1 year mark

WASHINGTON

— Today’s issue marks the first anniversary of U.S. Air Force **ONLINE news** which debuted March 17, 1999 as the service’s official newspaper.



The paper was created to provide a balanced weekly view of Air Force news. During the past year, readers turned to **ONLINE news** for first-hand information on standup of the expeditionary aerospace forces, stop-loss during Operation Allied Force, Department of Defense pay table reform, retention issues, recruiting efforts, Y2K preparations, congressional testimony by senior Air Force leadership and the anthrax vaccination program. In addition to reporting news affecting the Air Force, the paper provides readers an opportunity to express their opinions and voice their concerns to Air Force leaders.

The complete versions of the above articles are available online.

AF task force to combat recruiting, retention problems

WASHINGTON – The Air Force has “declared war” on its recruiting and retention problems with the establishment this week of a Recruiting and Retention Task Force charged with combating the service’s top force sustainment issues. The task force is a follow-on to the Recruiting Summit conducted in October 1999 and the Retention Summit held in January.

The Recruiting and Retention Task Force, reporting directly to the Air Force undersecretary and vice chief of staff, serves as the single point of contact for the integration, consolidation and coordination of recruiting and retention initiatives. The task force will encompass the total force: active duty, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard, involving both the officer corps and the enlisted force.

“Recruiting and retention represent the Air Force’s number one priorities,” said Ms. Carol DiBattiste, under secretary of the Air Force. “This task force demonstrates senior leadership’s commitment to working these critical issues.”

AF increases recruiters

continued from Page 1

vices by a ratio of 12 to 1, said Chief Master Sgt. Danny J. Roby, chief of enlisted accession policy at the air staff.

Despite being outnumbered, “our recruiters are the best,” Secretary Peters said. “Historically, our recruiters have each brought in about 25 to 30 recruits every year, beating the DOD-wide average of one recruit per month. As we get more recruiters on the streets, we should be able to get more high quality recruits into the Air Force.”

The Air Force is tackling three challenges in increasing the number of recruiters, Chief Roby said.

“We must have a pool of volunteers to draw from,” he said. “Once we have the volunteers, we must ‘ramp-up’ the recruiter schoolhouse to make sure each new recruiter is properly trained. Once they are trained, we must then place them in locations that will most benefit getting the Air Force message out to the American public.”

“To increase the number of airmen interested in recruiting, the service has made virtually all career fields available to transfer, offers recruiters assignment locations of choice, and a monthly \$375 special duty pay bonus,” said Chief Roby.

“We will continue to work our recruiting challenges in a concerted effort that includes increased advertising, a more visible presence in our communities, better recruiting offices, and more recruiters,” said Secretary Peters.

“The Air Force offers young Americans tremendous opportunities and by increasing the number of our recruiters, we will ensure that message reaches the widest possible audience.”



Broadcast focuses on DOD reform

WASHINGTON — People can hear first-hand about the latest defense reform initiatives during "DRI Checkpoint 2000: On the Road to Excellence," an electronic town hall broadcast scheduled March 23 from 1:30 to 3 p.m. EST.

Hosted by Stan Soloway, director of the Defense Reform Office and deputy under secretary of defense for Acquisition Reform, the broadcast will feature interactive discussions with Dr. John J. Hamre, deputy secretary of defense and a panel of senior DOD leaders. Dr. Hamre, together with the senior panelists, will discuss efforts such as electronic commerce, improved pay and retirement benefits, military

housing privatization, quality of life and other defense reform initiatives.

The Town Hall meeting will be available over the Internet and via satellite broadcast. Air Force officials said the broadcast has the potential to use an excessive amount of bandwidth that could hinder Internet and network performance at respective bases. Therefore, to optimize both accessibility and network performance, recommendations have been developed for Air Force people to view and participate in this session.

For more information on the broadcast, go to http://web.pentagon.mil/defense_reform.



Flood relief

AIR FORCE BASE HOEDSPRUIT, South Africa — The military effort to provide relief to flood victims in southern Africa picked up speed March 9 with the delivery of humanitarian supplies to Mozambique by three HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters.

Go online for the complete article.

Information Assurance vital

WASHINGTON — Information Assurance is crucial if the Defense Department hopes to confront the potential for cyber aggression and meet the challenges of the 21st Century, Maj. Gen. Thomas B. Goslin Jr., director of operations, U.S. Space Command, told the Senate Emerging Threats and Capabilities Committee March 1.

To do so means placing special emphasis on the importance of defending our information systems, he said.

According to General Goslin, a broad range of threats exist to DOD information infrastructure and its ability to maintain information superiority. Furthermore, USSPACECOM has become increasingly aware of certain vulnerabilities inherent in current defense information infrastructure.

Traveling display on national tour

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS (AFPN) — The "Air Force Experience" — a high-tech, interactive attraction designed to showcase career opportunities and help reconnect the Air Force with the American public — has taken to the road on its 30-city national tour.

The AFE is stopping in a new city every Thursday now through September. "The Air Force Experience is a fresh approach to educating the American public about the mission of the Air Force and assisting recruiting in today's competitive market," said Brig. Gen. Peter U. Sutton, Air Force Recruiting Service commander.

The complete versions of the above articles are available online.

Enlisted retention up

continued from Page 1

seeing and are cautiously optimistic that this positive trend will continue," said Carol DiBattiste, undersecretary of the Air Force.

Air Force officials said the upward trend may be credited to the pay and compensation initiatives passed this fiscal year as well as the service's continued emphasis on stabilizing operating tempo and improving quality of life for its people and their families.

"We have launched many initiatives and personnel programs, such as the expeditionary aerospace force concept (which brings predictability and stability for people and their families), increased enlisted promotion rates, and expanded selective reenlistment bonus program," Colonel Middleton said.

Additionally, the service has also addressed the operations tempo by calling for a reduction in exercises and inspections, and post-deployment stand-down programs to allow service members time to get reacquainted with their families.

Ms DiBattiste said "although the latest rates are encouraging, Air Force officials will continue to focus on readiness and people concerns. This is just an encouraging first sign, and we still have a long way to go before we can declare victory in the retention arena."

"The warning light came on," Lt Col Middleton said, "and we have seen it. We remain concerned in retaining our first and second term airmen, who represent our fully trained airmen and mid-career NCOs."

We're watching this very closely, said Ms DiBattiste. "Retention is one of the Air Force's top priorities. We will continue to work hard at improving pay and compensation, enhancing quality of life programs and furthering our efforts to stabilize ops tempo."



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